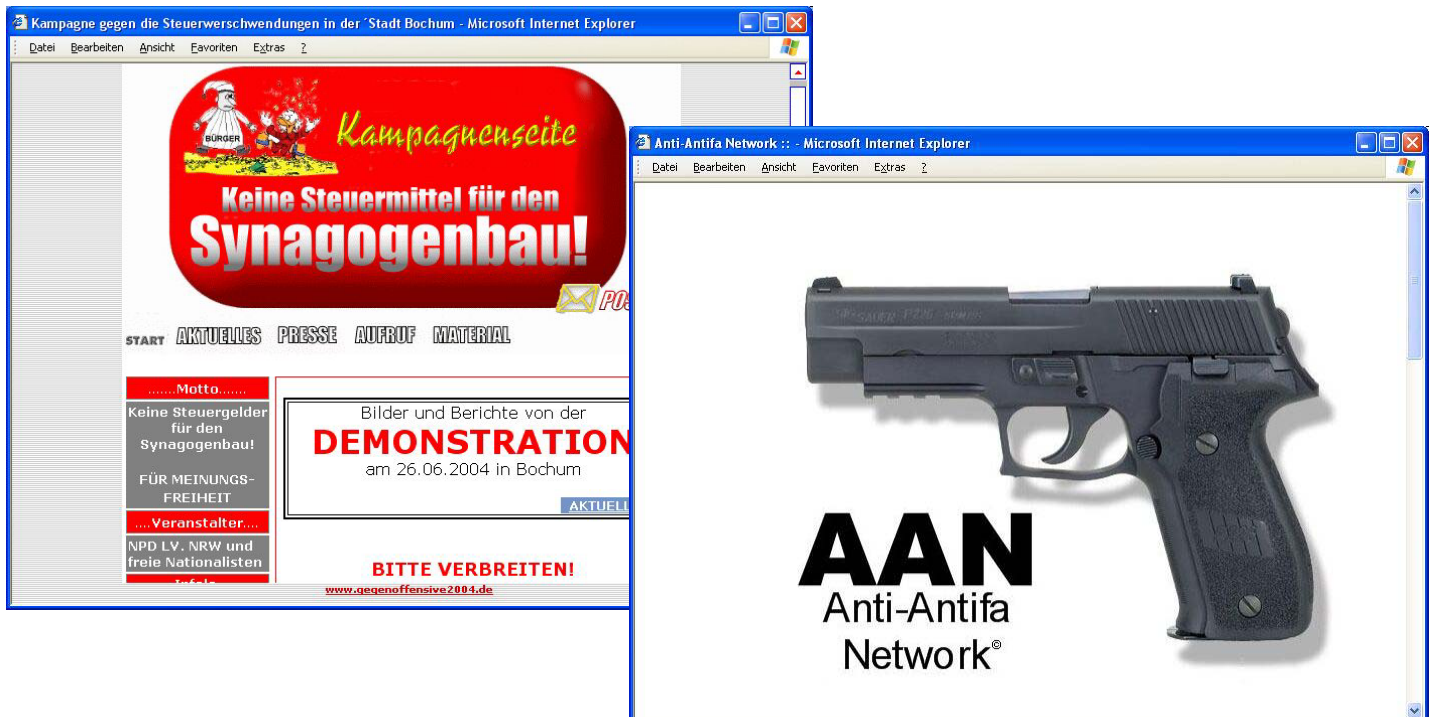


'Right-wing Extremism on the Internet' - successful strategies against Online-Hate -



Final Report by jugendschutz.net
about the entimon Project 2004

Sponsored by the
German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth (BMFSFJ)



1 Successful project work carried out by jugendschutz.net

In recent years, the project group of the organization for the protection of young people on the Net, jugendschutz.net, has developed and tested a broad range of options for putting an end to the activities of right-wing extremists on the Internet at both national and international levels. The group has managed to ban more than 500 objectionable Web offerings from the Net since June of 2001. They have also held more than 100 media pedagogical workshops and produced handouts, thereby contributing significantly to a competent strategy for dealing with right-wing extremism on the Web. This dual strategy was continued through the year 2004.

2 Internet monitoring as a basis for measures

Continuous monitoring of the right-wing extremist Web scene with relevance for youths has formed the basis of the successful project work carried out thus far. As a result, right-wing extremists' range of content continues to remain the focus of attention, and problematic developments are recognized early on. Last year, jugendschutz.net succeeded in further developing the quality of monitoring and gained new insights through systematic investigations. The project group compiled 1,230 new right-wing extremist Web addresses during the period under review. This was achieved with the help of reports from users, German authorities or foreign partner hotlines in 141 cases (20%). Staff members investigated 1,089 URLs (80%) themselves, with guestbooks and forums (42%) as well as link lists and top lists (33%) forming the main sources.

2.1 Increasingly professional right-wing extremist Web content

Right-wing extremists are becoming increasingly professional. With the aid of content management systems, many of them are able to structure their content clearly, keep it up to date, insert news in real time and integrate multimedia elements. Web sites from the environment of national resistance play a pioneering role, with this applying in particular to regional campaign offices.

More and more right-wing extremists try to safeguard their propaganda on the Internet and enhance the accessibility of their Web sites. They make their contents available at a number of Web addresses at the same time and use so-called redirecting services in addition. During the period under review, around 35% of the offerings could be accessed at more than one URL on the Net, with one Web site even possessing 18 different Web addresses.

Offerings from the environment of organized right-wing extremism (political parties, mail-order dealers, publications), the so-called National Resistance movement (comradeships, campaign offices) and bands could be accessed with the greatest consistency in 2004. Numerous right-wing extremist Web sites were only on-line for a short time with no recognizable integration into the scene (private Web sites). Operators of objectionable content went off-line, because their sites had been blocked by the respective provider as a result of the project group's intervention.

2.2 Right-wing extremists use forums for networking purposes

Web forums are of key importance in communication, networking and mobilization within the right-wing extremist scene. There, internal strategy issues are discussed and current political topics taken up. In 2004, there were eight central German forums that were advertised in numerous websites from the scene. At times, there were several thousand users registered, and several thousand right-wing extremist presentations could be called up.

During the period under review, two of the most influential right-wing extremist discussion platforms on the Web merged and bundled their activities. The 'Nationale Forum', operated by German neo-Nazis, merged with the highly-frequented European neo-Nazi forum, skadi.net. In former times the 'Nationale Forum' had more than 1,000 members, recorded more than 25,000 offerings and was visited by, on average, more than 20,000 Internet users per month. The Nationale Forum's range of influence has increased even further since the merger with skadi.net.

The so-called Freie Forum (free forum) was the comradeship scene's most influential discussion platform in 2004. It had an average of approx. 2,000 registered users. Here, leading neo-Nazis like Christian Worch or Axel Reitz also participated in the political and strategy discussions. The NPD's Nationale Forum Deutschland is the most important player in the area of right-wing extremist parties.

2.3 Right-wing extremists lure teenagers with music

Right-wing extremists purposefully employ music on the Internet in order to lure teenagers. On numerous Web sites, they attempt to entice children to join the right-wing extremist scene by the use of free downloads, audio samples, concert reports or options for ordering CDs and merchandising articles. In 2004, the project group documented around 100 offerings that could be ascribed to the right-wing extremist music scene (bands, singer-songwriters, fans, so-called communities).

In the summer of 2004, a new quality of propaganda emerged in the form of the so-called Schoolyard campaign. Right-wing extremists had planned the nationwide distribution of a CD with propaganda at schools. The aim was to arouse the interest of children and teenagers in the right-wing extremist body of thought by the use of a mix of free music, ideological texts and contact addresses that were included. Although distribution of the CD was stopped by a confiscation order, in autumn, the initiators began disseminating their contents in a toned-down version on the schulhof.net Web site.

The strategy of addressing young people in a targeted fashion by offering free music even found imitators abroad. For example, the American neo-Nazi music label, Panzerfaust Records produced a so-called pro-white sampler and named it 'Project Schoolyard'. Under the motto of 'We don't just entertain racist kids - we create them', the CD was distributed to young people aged from 13 to 19 years in the U.S.A. The NPD, too, used a CD targeted at young voters for propaganda purposes in the parliamentary election campaign in the state of Saxony. Both right-wing extremist CDs were also available immediately through file sharing systems.

2.4 Neo-Nazis instrumentalize sociopolitical topics

In 2004, right-wing extremists staged a massive attempt to use sociopolitical discussions as a peg for their propaganda. They went canvassing on Web sites where they stirred up fear of social decline and denounced the German federal government's social reforms as 'un-German-like' and 'antisocial'. 'National Socialists' called for resistance to HartzIV and Agenda 2010 on their Web sites and rallied people to hold protest marches. Slogans like 'Germans first' or 'Nationalization means independence' adorned advertising banners on the Web. There, they also offered T-shirts with 'Our agenda is called Resistance' printed on them or lighters with 'Put pressure on the system – down with Agenda 2010' for purchase as 'campaign articles'.

This was accompanied by campaigns where right-wing extremists attacked foreigners and Jews in particular. They used racist and anti-Semitic slogans, for example, to organize resistance to the construction of a mosque in Kassel or a synagogue in Bochum on Web sites they had set up specifically for that purpose. The contents of the anti-foreigner propaganda were also aimed at Turkey's possible admission to the EU. The operators stirred up hate against Turks ('Germans, put up a fight!') and called for repatriation of the foreign fellow citizens living in Germany. Simultaneously, they propagated policies favoring births and families under national auspices, using the slogan, 'The country needs German children'.

2.5 The NPD addresses teenagers via Internet

Right-wing extremist parties also use the Web to gain teenage followers. During the period under review, the project group monitored the Web content of right-wing extremist parties and documented a total of 183 Web sites, with these primarily being of the NPD and the Republikaner.

Most of the offerings were stale self-promotions of the respective organizations, their functionaries and their activities, which do not appear very attractive to teenagers outside of the right-wing extremist scene. Optical effects, topics that appealed to teenagers or communication offerings were frequently absent.

Some of the NPD's Web offerings were designed appealingly and contained animations (e.g. Flashes, NewsTickers, banner advertising), interactive elements (e.g. surveys, chats, forums and guestbooks) and invitations to concerts, midsummer celebrations or party meetings. On its Web sites, the NPD also openly demonstrated solidarity with the neo-Nazi comradeship spectrum, provided links to their Web sites and advertised joint events and campaigns. The Web offering titled 'Eine-Bewegung-Werden' ('becoming one movement') was created in the summer of 2004. It proclaimed the formation of a 'Peoples' front from the right' and the elimination of the political system as a strategic goal. They also made announcements when leading activists of the National Resistance movement like Thomas Wulff, Ralph Tegethoff and Thorsten Heise joined the NPD.

2.6 Regional Right-wing groups on the advance

The right-wing comradeships strengthened their activities on the Web in 2004. The number of offerings from this segment rose to 159 (previous year: 67). This indicates

the great value these groups attach to the Internet. Right-wing extremists from North Rhine-Westphalia, Hessen, Bavaria, Baden-Wuerttemberg and Thuringia were particularly active on the Net. The skilled amalgamation of racist propaganda, multimedia presentations and recreation offerings for teenagers are what make those sites especially relevant with reference to the protection of youths and give reason to fear that the lived-in world portrayed there will attract youths.

Comradeships called for national resistance, announced events and reported on right-wing extremist demonstrations, protest marches as well as social gatherings in the evening. Major marches like the commemoration march for Rudolf Heß to Wunsiedel and the annual right-wing extremist demonstration on the 1st of May were advertised on the Net. Activists set up special pages for regional campaigns involving more than one group, which were usually linked to the Web presence of a comradeship and additionally accessible via rerouting services (e.g. demo-dortmund.tk).

Using the slogan, 'Form national black blocks', parts of the comradeship scene propagated participation in right-wing extremist marches as a unified group. Following the campaign forms employed by left-wing groups, they called for the demonstration of unity by forming so-called black blocks. However, discussions of issues like covering faces, a readiness to resort to violence and a black dress code were marked by controversy, with some of the activists fully rejecting the formation of black blocks or demanding a unified ideological and strategic presence within the meaning of a 'spiritual black front' instead.

3 The project group achieved removal of 131 Web sites

The project group investigated a total of 256 new objectionable right-wing extremist offerings, 135 of them had German Web addresses. There were starting points for countermeasures in around two-thirds of the cases of violation in Germany and abroad. Removals were achieved in 78% of the cases. The use of logos of organisations violating the constitution and the distribution of contents inciting the people or, as the case may be, hypotheses denying the Holocaust formed the most frequent violations.

As a result of the consistent persecution of right-wing extremist contents, there has been a constant decrease in the number of recently recorded objectionable Web sites in the past years (2002: 354, 2003: 296, 2004: 256). This significant decrease is an important result of the sustained work of the project at jugendschutz.net.

	Forwarded to the authorities	Contact with providers	Contact with DENIC	Total
Offline	7	65	2	74
Relevant parts removed	5	9	1	15
On-line, unchanged	26	2		28
Total	38	76	3	117

Jugendschutz.net's success in combating racist content in Germany

	Contact with providers	Forwarded to partner hotlines	Total
Offline	28	8	36
Relevant parts removed	5	1	6
On-line, unchanged	2	8	10
Total	35	17	52

Jugendschutz.net's success in combating racist content in foreign countries

4 Successful activities on an international level

In 2004, the project group intensified its international activities against racism on the Net and pushed collaboration with foreign complaints bureaus and transnational organizations. The problem of right-wing extremist propaganda on the Internet can only be solved using a transborder approach. With EU decisions against racism as a basis, jugendschutz.net, is undertaking lasting efforts to implement these activities and collaboration in actual practice.

In the year 2002, jugendschutz.net founded the International Network Against Cyber Hate (INACH) as an amalgamation of active initiatives against right-wing extremism on the Net. Collaboration and integration of the participating organizations were expanded in 2004. After just two years, the network already comprises partners from 12 European and non-European states. International sharing of information was pushed by activities such as the joint production of brochures like 'Anti-Semitism on the Internet' and 'Hate Crimes and the Internet'. In these, the INACH members presented the results of country-specific investigations and examples of approaches to the issue that had been successful. The project group was decisively involved in the creation of both brochures.

The practical collaboration of INACH members in the fight against particularly relevant right-wing extremist offerings has garnered success. Co-operation with the Dutch Complaints Bureau for Discrimination of the Magenta foundation and the Polish organization of Nie Wieder ('never again'), for example, made it possible to close German-language offerings where right-wing extremists called for violence motivated by racism.

At conferences held by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in Berlin, Paris and Warsaw, jugendschutz.net presented the successful project work, showed possibilities for measures against right-wing extremist content on the Net and tried to enlist support among the community of states for the harmonization of legal regulations and their consistent application.

5 The promotion of media competence against right-wing extremism

The promotion of media competence in dealing with right-wing extremism on the Net forms a central column of anti-racist project work. The demand for corresponding events, handouts and information exceeds existing capacities, to the effect that the

project group has concentrated on collaboration with multipliers and the holding of exemplary workshops. In 2004, the project group conceived and conducted 30 workshops with teenagers and multipliers from schools and extracurricular youth work in co-operation with education providers. Additionally, they explained the potential danger of right-wing extremist activities on the Web and possible countermeasures at 13 specialized conferences and expert discussions.

In 2004, the project group elaborated two didactic methodology modules for educational curricula. The team then tested these modules at a workshop for student teachers lasting several days that was conducted in co-operation with the constitution protection agency in North Rhine-Westphalia (Verfassungsschutz Nordrhein-Westfalen) and at a course held at the Protestant University of Applied Sciences Darmstadt (Evangelische Fachhochschule Darmstadt). Both events were received very well and made the enormous demand for practice-oriented further education evident. The concept, experiences and insights gained from the events are to be published in a brochure after a further test run.

The second edition of the pedagogic handout on right-wing extremism on the Internet elaborated by the project group has been available on the Internet through the German federal central office for political education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung) since May 2004. In reaction to the right-wing extremist schoolyard campaign, the project group prompted the responsible ministries of the German federal states to make the handouts available to teachers as preventive action against right-wing extremist propaganda at schools. Subsequently, the CD-ROM was distributed to all secondary schools throughout the states of Rhineland-Palatinate, Lower Saxony, Brandenburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg and Bremen.

6 Ensure the sustainability of the project work

With its project against right-wing extremism, jugendschutz.net has achieved pioneering work. Contrary to the widespread opinion that measures against right-wing extremist content on foreign servers are pointless, the project group has developed ways and means for taking action against offerings abroad. In more than one hundred cases, the project group has been successful in banning hate propaganda and establishing lasting communication with numerous providers, including the U.S.A.

Despite the numerous cases where objectionable offerings were banned successfully, the largest number thus far of newly recorded right-wing extremist Web addresses points to the need to continue to reinforce counter-activities and deal with right-wing extremism on a permanent basis. The entimon project provides the first opportunity for continuous work in this area of relevance to teenagers. Here, jugendschutz.net's multidimensional, pragmatic approach against racist hate on the Net has proven effective and enjoys widespread recognition by the German federal government and state governments. The project group's work has even come to be esteemed as a successful concept by international organizations.